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DEPT PASS TO USAID/OFDA ROBERT ANDREW

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA DISASTER DECLARATION

¶1. I am declaring a disaster in Slovenia for the loss of lives, property, livelihoods, and serious damage to infrastructure caused by a surprise flood that damaged one-third of the Republic of Slovenia. I hereby request \$50,000 for disaster relief from USAID/OFDA.

¶2. On September 18, 2007, Prime Minister Janez Jansa declared the September 17 floods in Slovenia to be a national disaster. The Government of Slovenia's (GOS) quick response kept the loss of lives to seven. The immense amount of rain and subsequent flooding, however, caused an estimated 200 million euro of heavy damage to one-third of the country. The GOS resources are not sufficient to respond fully to this disaster. The GOS does not maintain a emergency fund for disaster relief. During the first few days during and after the floods, the GOS deployed 6,000 firefighters and 1,000 soldiers to help in search and rescue operations and the provision of immediate relief to those affected by the floods. The GOS has requested assistance from the USG specifically for the municipality of Zelezniki, which endured the most deaths and damages from the flood. Zelezniki experienced a flash flood that resulted in a 7 foot "tsunami" tearing through the town at high speed, sweeping away hundreds of cars, buses, and, tragically, individuals. In its wake it left hundreds of damaged homes, the medical clinic had to be abandoned, and the town's water treatment plant was knocked out of commission. Assisting the GOS will show moral and humanitarian support, and will provide much-needed help to restore clean drinking water to the residents of Zelezniki. The GOS has been a staunch NATO ally, punching well above its weight in its military participation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo. Slovenia also contributed to the relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

¶3. Current situation: 43 municipalities were affected by the flood. The GOS has allocated 1.5 million euro from the budget of the Ministry of the Environment for the most urgent repairs, with half of that spent already on immediate assistance following the flooding. The GOS Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Relief has requested assistance from the U.S., specifying that the greatest need is in Zelezniki. The GOS estimates that reconstruction country-wide will cost over 200 million euro, with 70 million euro needed for the municipality of Zelezniki. The flood was particularly disastrous for Zelezniki since it had just spent several million euros on reconstruction in 2002. Zelezniki, with the support of the GOS, has established a special fund for contributions received toward flood relief.

¶4. Our plans for the \$50,000: Post, in cooperation with the Mayor's Office in Zelezniki and with the approval of the GOS, would transfer the \$50,000 to a special fund created especially for the flood relief effort in Zelezniki for use in constructing a water pump station and fence. The flood destroyed all the water treatment and pump stations in Zelezniki. One month after the floods and Zelezniki

residents must still boil water for consumption. The Mayor of Zelezniki, Mihael Prevc, told Charge that many of the residents of Zelezniki are discouraged by the disaster and are considering leaving the town, rather than rebuilding. Re-constructing the water pump station would help provide clean water, enhance public health and help restore a sense of normalcy to the disrupted lives of the residents.

15. Other donors: Slovenian businesses and individuals have given strong support across the nation. The Slovenian Red Cross and NGO Caritas have been active in the affected areas providing meals and distributing bottled water. The GOS is currently finalizing a damage assessment report to submit to the EU Solidarity Fund. The EU Solidarity Fund, which was established in 2002, assists member states in case of natural disasters that cause 3 billion euro in damages or 0.6% of its gross national income. The Fund has an annual budget of 1 billion euro. In the case of Slovenia, 200 million euro is about 0.65%. The Fund can take up to four months to determine if it will support Slovenia's request and to what amount. We believe our support in providing potable water will be of great assistance to the people of Zelezniki until further support is obtained.

COLEMAN